



Royal College
of Nursing

Library and Archive Service

Review of the year 2021



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Foreword

At the start of 2021 the continuing impact of COVID-19 saw the UK endure the longest and most restrictive government-imposed lockdown to date during the pandemic. In response, we closed our physical library and reverted to delivering services via our online support model. In April, we took the decision to re-start postal loans and introduce a free book return system, which was praised by our members. In July, we re-opened our physical library for limited weekday hours, a move welcomed by members.

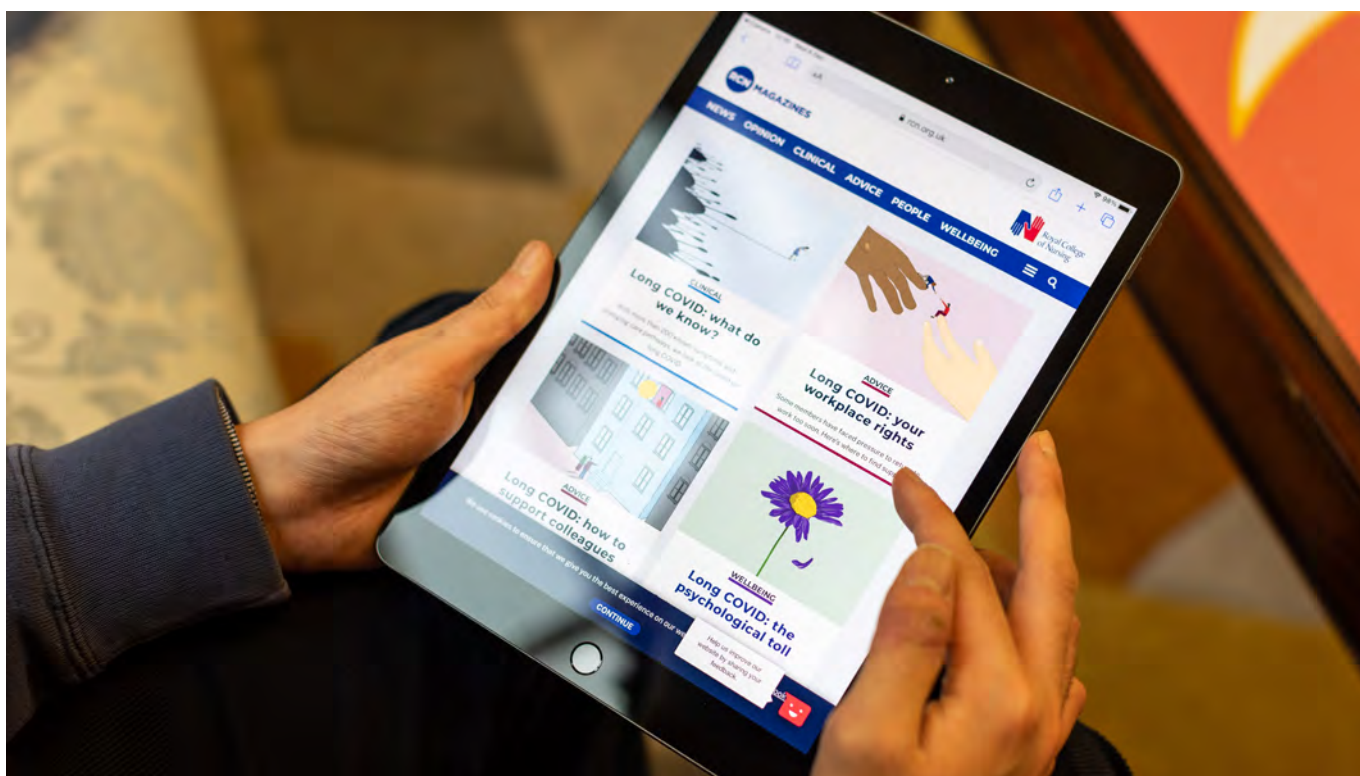
To boost awareness of our online services, we overhauled our marketing approach. The resulting campaigns focussed on increasing engagement with members across our social media channels, attracting a record number of members to our resources and events.

In October, we held our most popular event yet – a special online audience with the actor David Harewood. Co-produced with the RCN Mental Health Forum Ethnic Minority Sub-group, the *Maybe I Don't Belong Here* webinar featured David Harewood in conversation with


mental health nurses and service users who explored what it means to be a black British man navigating the mental health system. The year also saw the highest ever number of RCN members take advantage of our *Know How* online training events to enhance and expand their library skills.


To make our eLibrary more accessible and user friendly, our collections team introduced two new tools – LibKey Nomad and BrowZine – which make our collections easier to find and use. We also further expanded the resources on offer to users with our purchase of the EMCare database and the digitisation of more historic RCN publications.

In 2021, the archive team initiated several important projects designed to grow the RCN Digital Archive, one of which included collecting evidence of ongoing RCN COVID-19 related activities. The archive also embarked on a major project to transfer its catalogue and collection management data to a new system, which is due to launch in 2022.




Enquiries and social media


 1,775 e-mail enquiries


 727 telephone enquiries

 445 webchat enquiries

 481 in-person enquiries
(from July)


 5,230 Twitter followers


 935 Instagram followers


 674 Facebook followers

 9,008 newsletter subscribers

Collections


 1,000+ print and
eBooks added to collection


 22,449 individuals
using eLibrary


 245,521 full-text journal
articles downloaded

 76,002 eBooks
accessed

Library training


 288 attendees at
1-2-1 training sessions


 432 attendees at online
group sessions

 305 literature searches
undertaken

Exhibitions and events


 4,347 attendees at events


 9,865 visitors to online exhibitions

 63 events held

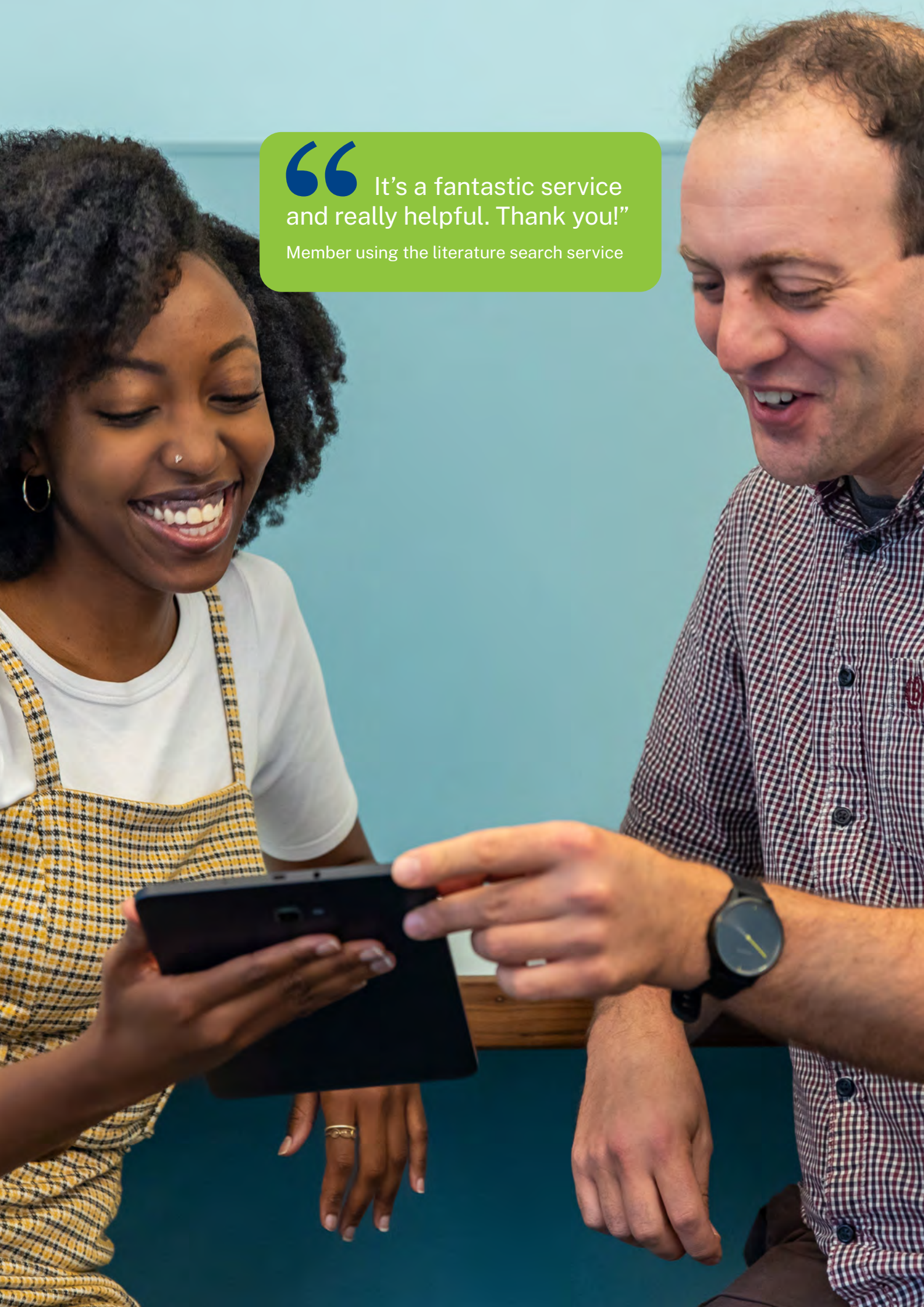
Archives

 34,348 items transferred to digital archive

 522 items made available to the public

 1,530 items made available to members





“

It's a fantastic service
and really helpful. Thank you!”

Member using the literature search service

Summary of key highlights

Staffing

The team welcomed new staff including Sarah Bond as our new part-time Exhibitions Co-ordinator. Christine Goodson, a previous Graduate Trainee, re-joined us as an Information Assistant working Tuesday to Saturday. Cathryn Peppard and Emma Taylor were seconded into additional responsibility roles within our management team. Meanwhile, our

new Graduate Trainees started in August with Howard Chae and Ellen Cropley joining our Customer Service team and Martha Gartside-Mitchell joining the Collections team. We said goodbye to Philip Segall, Katherine Chorley and Sarah Cull (who retired after 21 years of service with us), while Frances Reed moved to a part-time role.



“ I’m so glad I made use of such fantastic resources provided by the RCN”

Member feedback

Awards

We are delighted to report that we retained our Customer Service Excellence status with an outstanding 21 compliance plus grades. Our Archives Accreditation status was maintained, and we were selected to pilot a set of new diversity questions for this award.

Our marketing team completed workshops with the specialist consultant Ned Potter, a programme that was made possible thanks to winning a marketing bursary from CILIP, the UK's library and information association.



Media and publications

Our *Maybe I Don't Belong Here* event made a major media splash. Coverage included a Channel 4 News slot, during which the journalist and news presenter Krishnan Guru-Murthy interviewed David Harewood and Simon Arday from the RCN Mental Health Forum Ethnic Minority Sub-group about David's experience of mental health services as a black

man. The event was highly publicised through articles in the nursing press. The archive was credited for its contribution to the BBC production *Our NHS: A Hidden History* on the BBC with David Olusoga. We also published a family history article in the RCN Bulletin, which led to a record influx of family history search requests.

“ I hadn't realised how many resources were available online with the RCN libraries until I spoke to a member of your team ”

Member feedback

Professional conferences

In 2021, we presented at a number of M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries events. These contributions included delivering a paper to the Consortium's *The Future of Libraries* annual conference which was held virtually, and a Galleries Libraries Archives Museums (GLAM) workshop for staff working towards chartership on what we can learn from galleries, libraries, archives and museums.

During the year, Sarah Chaney and Frances Reed presented on *Faith, Medicine and Religion* at the European Association of the History of Nursing and Health. The archive team also presented at an Archives and Records Association (ARA) conference on managing digital collections. Finally, Frances Reed was invited to join a panel speaking about UK medical collections at an event hosted by the Museums Association.

Service development

The Library and Heritage Centre reopened to members in July 2021. To maintain social distancing, we introduced a booking system and achieved an average of 42% occupancy over a six-month period. Initially, only open three days a week, in September we were able to extend this coverage to five days a week, opening for six hours a day.

In July, we initiated a free book returns service, using the automated Clicksit app, which now enables members to request a free returns label and drop off their parcel at any of the 7,500 local stores that offer the Collect+ service. Our new service made it easier for members to return books when our opening hours were restricted and recognised the financial hardships many of our members face. In 2021, 90 members made use of the service to return books.

Over the summer months we conducted a user experience (UX) project to gain a deeper understanding of how the RCN library features in users' daily research lives. Interviewing six registered nurses working in a variety of health care settings around the UK, this is the first time we have conducted a UX project on a broad theme, rather than seeking feedback on a specific service.

Overall, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with interviewees praising the library services and telling us how much they had used us and how valued we are. The project resulted in a rich pool of data, which we will use to inform our marketing strategy next year.



“ I would like to express my thanks for this fantastic service”

Member using the literature search service

Learning and teaching

In 2021, we launched our online *Know How* workshops for members. Providing group teaching sessions on a variety of topics, including searching databases, evaluating health care information, referencing, and reference management software, these weekly workshops are free to members. The events have proven a huge success, with 432 members attending a workshop in 2021 and excellent member feedback being received. We plan to develop and expand the programme in the coming year.

We also began to develop a new evidence search summaries service that we hope will better support the wider RCN with its evidence needs. Due to launch in 2022, this service will enhance the literature search service we currently offer to RCN staff. By including a summary of the evidence found, RCN staff will be able to get to the best evidence as quickly as possible.

The team also supported the work and development of the RCN Education, Learning

and Development (ELD) strategy. Our literature searches were used to embed the evidence base in the development of policies and procedures, and we continued to support the current courses. Overall, we delivered 26 library teaching sessions to ELD courses in 2021, as well as providing an online reading list for every course.

Throughout the year we continued to offer our 1-2-1 teaching sessions on databases and met over 250 members. We added Zotero reference management teaching to our 1-2-1 offer, so our members can get help using a reference management tool as well as databases. A comprehensive support page for Zotero, our reference management tools, was launched in conjunction with the 1-2-1 sessions, ensuring a range of self-service support was available alongside our training appointments.

“ The session was very helpful in demystifying literature search”

Member attending library 1-2-1 training



Royal College
of Nursing

Library and heritage centre

Opening hours

Monday	9am–7pm
Tuesday	9am–7pm
Wednesday	9am–7pm
Thursday	9am–7pm
Friday	9am–7pm
Saturday	9am–5pm
Sunday	Closed

“ Very useful session. I was aware of the library service, but didn't realise how much members could get access to”

Get online, get ahead webinar attendee

Marketing and social media

Marketing

Last year was a watershed moment for our marketing and social media teams. Following a bursary award from the CILIP's Marketing and Communications Group, we were able to book some specialist coaching with the library marketing consultant Ned Potter. These training sessions helped the team understand and plan marketing campaigns, be more focused in our marketing goals, and our messages to members.

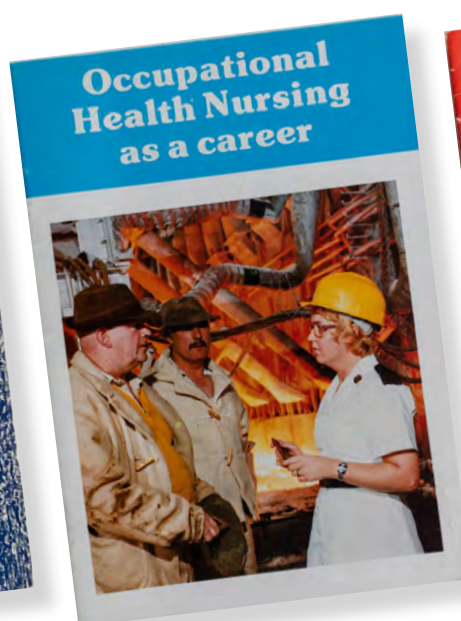
Following this training, we ran a number of campaigns that were successfully promoted on social media, together with articles in member magazines, news stories on our website, and highlights in our email newsletters.

We kicked off the year with our first campaign – *Library in your living room* – which was designed to empower members to use our online library resources. Running from February to April, at a time when the Library and Heritage Centre was still not open to RCN members, the campaign highlighted the rich choice of library resources members could access from the comfort of their own home.

Following on from the success of this first campaign, we decided to put names to faces and make the library service even more approachable to members. Run between April and July, the *Your RCN Libraries* campaign promoted the real people answering telephone, webchat, and email enquiries, and included online training sessions for members.

In August, we conducted a shorter campaign called *Summer Reading*, which showcased resources from our collection that focus on health and wellbeing for members. Our last campaign of the year was *Nothing but Nursing*, which set out to promote our unique and specialised collection, as well as the expertise of RCN library staff in supporting RCN members.

Following each campaign, we assessed how effective our strategies were and, going forward, we will continue to develop our skills and expertise in building campaigns that reach our members, highlight our services, and advertise our events.



Social media

Last year saw us gain more followers across all three of our social media channels. With 5,230 followers, Twitter remains the principal social media channel we use, as it has the most engagement within the medical community. By the end of 2021, we had achieved 925 followers on Instagram and, following on from the workshops delivered by Ned Potter, we have adapted the content we now share on this platform.

On Facebook we experimented successfully with paid adverts. Our most popular Facebook advert, promoting the *Past Caring* podcast, achieved over 26,000 views and by the end of 2021 we had 700 likes on our Facebook page.



The events programme

In 2021, over 4,000 people from around the world attended our online public events. In addition to welcoming RCN members from across the UK, event attendees joined us from across Europe, North America, Brazil, India, Israel, Lebanon and elsewhere.

Highlights of the year included partnering with the RCN Mental Health Forum to create an event featuring the actor and author David Harewood in conversation with black mental health nurses and service users (attended by 570 people). Our other top ranked event was *Witches' Stories*, an RCN Foundation Annual Lecture that showcased Professor Nicola Ring's new research into the Scottish healers and midwives accused of witchcraft 400 years ago (attended by 487 people).

Over the year we held a further 10 *Nursing a Pandemic* events, during which members were interviewed live about their experiences during

“Great session and so valuable to be able to share best practice and lessons learned...”

Nursing a Pandemic event attendee

COVID-19. Most of these events were filmed and added to the RCN Archive to provide a permanent record of the varied pandemic nursing experience. We also ran five *Inclusion Café Book Clubs*, providing opportunities for members to learn about and discuss inclusion and diversity in nursing. The series included a *Living Library* event, with seven Global Majority nurses participating as 'human books' to share their stories and experiences.

Our partnership work saw us collaborate with the archipelago theatre collective to run participatory sessions for members. This resulted in a short digital theatre piece, *A Call to Care*, a creative documentary exploring nurses' experiences in the pandemic is available to view at <https://youtu.be/sqqZgOp3Aqk>. We offered writing workshops in partnership with the Royal Literary Fund, initiated creative activities with various providers, and joined forces with the *Remaking the Human Body* project at Queen Mary, University of London, on *The IVF Experience*.

We also began to re-open on-site services to our audiences. The *Who Cares?* exhibition was reinstalled and opened to RCN members in September, and in late August we ran the first RCN hybrid event – a book launch during which we welcomed a small audience for a reception and talks in Cowdray Hall, with more than 100 participants attending virtually.

Collections

Adding a more diverse voice into our collection was one of the main drivers of this year's work in the collection development team. New material was added to start to address the imbalance in the voice within our collection.

We also added new tools to provide seamless access to the RCN library resources. BrowZine now enables our members to read and browse our online journals through a virtual bookshelf that delivers a more personalised experience. In addition, members can now download LibKey Nomad which simplifies the process of linking to journal articles when browsing internet resources such as Wikipedia or PubMed.

Through careful negotiation we were able to release enough budget to subscribe to Emcare, a nursing and allied health database that we have wanted to share with members for some years. We continued to subscribe to the popular Royal Marsden online resource.

As part of our partnership digitisation project with Cengage Gale, we loaned key historic nursing journals for digitisation, a project that had to be put on hold in March 2020. Digitisation will help protect our rare historic nursing journals collection and, once digitised, this rare content will be added to the Gale Women's Studies Archive and Gale Primary

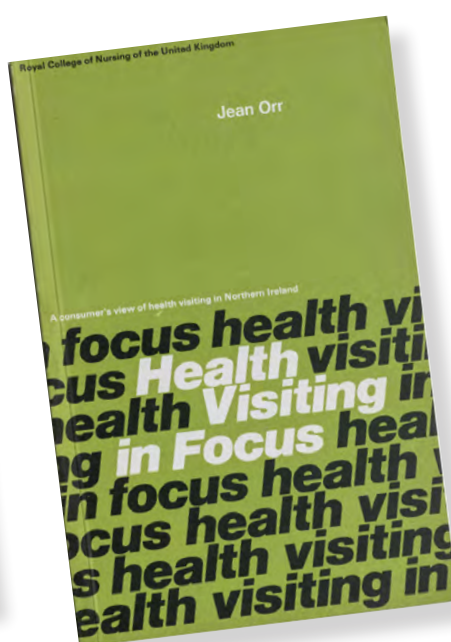
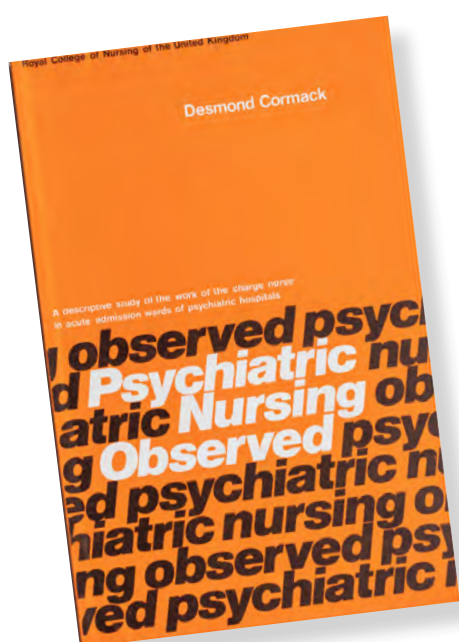
Sources. We are looking forward to enabling our members and an international research audience to access this valuable resource. In other work, stock that was water damaged following a library store flood in August 2020 was successfully returned to us following conservation work; only a few items were beyond salvage.

An unexpected HMRC refund was used to pay a specialist commercial supplier to digitise unique content of over 2,000 RCN produced publications. This included digitisation of the RCN Research Series, which features 51 titles commissioned in 1973.

Finally, we submitted recommendations for the inclusion of more UK-nursing specific terms to the medical subject headings of the National Library of Medicine thesaurus. We believe these additions will make nursing-specific library content more accessible.

“ I love everything about it”

RCN Library and Archive website feedback



Archives

Following the unexpected requirement to shift to online working in 2020, the archive team helped RCN colleagues by providing digital-record-keeping advice and practical long distance help using Microsoft Teams. This network of 'Archive Superusers' was officially recognised by our Executive Team in 2021 as being a new and efficient way of working across the RCN.

In December, the archive team completed a major collecting project – the *RCN Safe and Effective Staffing Campaign Archive Project*. Records were assembled from RCN Wales, where the new law is being implemented, as well as RCN Scotland, where the law was passed, and England, where legislative work is still underway. When processed this will form the UK-wide RCN campaign archive.

In April, a brand-new project began. The RCN Foundation funded project *Sharing Nurses' Life Stories Through Their Archives* is a cataloguing project funded by Mary Abbott, who left a generous legacy to the RCN archive. Mary Abbott worked for the World Health Organization and this project focuses on raising

the visibility of internationally significant nurses like her. We selected several globe-trotting nurses to promote, creating online profiles of their career and collections to show how British nurses influenced nursing overseas in the 20th century.

In June, the archive team was excited to replace the outdated archival catalogue management software. Following extensive investigation, the team selected Epexio (from Metadatis), and the complex testing and implementation phase began. Epexio will enable the administration of both archival and museum collection information to professional accreditation standards, whilst being easier for everyone to use.

Other longer-term activities continued throughout 2021, such as the collecting of COVID-19 related records for the corporate archive. The RCN produced unique records during the pandemic which reflect the truly extraordinary situation RCN members faced. These records will provide vital evidence whenever the RCN contributes to future public inquiries.

“ Thanks. This was really helpful and amazing to do over Zoom!”

Writing for publication with the Royal Literary Fund workshop attendee



the district nurse

The District Nurse is a State Registered Nurse who has taken a further short course of training to prepare her for the National Certificate in District Nursing. Men as well as women can work in the community health team as District Nurses. The State Enrolled Nurse may take training to qualify for the National Certificate in District Nursing (SEN).

The District Nurse works in close liaison with the Health Visitor, the Domestic Midwife and the doctors in the group practice, also with the ancillary staff, who work under her guidance. She provides clinical nursing care for the patient, working in the patient's home, the doctor's surgery and the health centre. She has an overall interest in the patients and their families, and another of her responsibilities is the rehabilitation of patients who are on the road to recovery.

In order to be completely effective, she has many useful points of contact. She needs them in order to provide complete nursing care for patients, from children to elderly people. She also has a strong liaison with the staff of her local hospital, where some of her patients may be admitted for special medical treatment. An advantage is that as she is hospital trained, she is familiar with the treatment which the patient receives, and so she is able to continue with the same nursing care when he is discharged from hospital.

District Nurses are busy people. They have to use their initiative, and they gain a vast amount of experience. As one of them said: "Our four doctors in the group practice cover an exceptionally large area. I don't think there is any kind of case we don't handle at some time or other during the year. As far as I am concerned, I have my own duties during the surgery sessions at the health centre, but I also expect to have to plan my own working day to a considerable extent. Twice a week I run my own Special Dressings Clinic, sometimes with the help of other members of the nursing team, but very often on my own. I think that it is important to stress the team angle, because there is room in this sort of nursing for all kinds of people who have had nursing experience, both men and women, State Registered and State Enrolled."

RCN Foundation Project

The RCN archive has been working on a project to share nursing stories funded by Mary Abbott, a former RCN member and international nurse. Mary Abbott was born in St Andrews and trained as a nurse at St George's in London. She went on to work internationally with the World Health Organization in Canada, Nigeria, Iran, the Phillipines and Denmark. In 1998, Mary Abbott recorded an interview for the RCN archive, subsequently donating her personal papers and leaving a bequest to the RCN Foundation to support the RCN archive.

Mary's great passion was international nurse education, which is the focus for this project. Her bequest is being used to fund a project

showing how historical papers, images, biographies and oral history interviews can be linked together. The project's aim is to improve online access to the archive and promote the achievements of individual nurses.

The RCN Archive hold an extensive range of personal papers and we are proud that so many members entrust their personal papers to us. Our collection is diverse, reflecting the experiences of nursing across the UK and internationally and is used extensively by history of nursing researchers who interpret and share these stories. You can find out more about Mary and our personal papers collection in our [online archive catalogue](#).



Mary Abbott speaking at a nurse training school in India



October 2022 | 010 329



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promotes excellence in practice and
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Published by the Royal College of Nursing
20 Cavendish Square
London W1G 0RN
020 7409 3333

 www.rcn.org.uk

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